A PACK OF OLD PURITANS

MAINTAINING THE

Unlawfulneſs & inexpediency Of ſubſcribing the new ENGAGEMENT.

PROFESSING

The diſſatisfaction of their judgements, and the unreſolvedneſs of their Conſciences, with Mr. JOHN DURY's Conſiderations and juſt Repropoſals concerning it.

And anſwering the moſt material Allegations that are urged by him or others for ſubſcription.

MAT. 18. 26.
In the mouth of two or three Witneſſes, every word ſhall be eſtabliſhed.

LONDON,
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TO THE

CHRISTIAN READER:

AS there is no *Poaſt* ſo rotten, but through the *Painters* Art and Induſtry, may eaſily be caſt into the *forme* & *colour* of a *marble Piller:* So (Chriſtian Reader) there is no *action* ſo corrupt and (rotten in it ſelf) but if it may be of uſe to *ſupport a prevailling faction*, ſhall have many who wil ſtraine both their braines & Conſciences to caſt it into ſuch a colour as may render it moſt *ſubſervient* to that *deſigne*.

For the proof of this, we ſhall need to produce no other *Evidences* and Inſtances, then thoſe new *State Chaplains*, who daily appear like ſo many *paraſciticall Painters* in their ſeveral Pamphlets, to *varniſh over* that *complicated impiety* of ſubſcribing the new *Engagement*, with the *orient colours* of an *indiſpenſible duty*, *neceſſary*, *juſt*, *and equall*.

And although to teach others to break the *leaſt of Chriſts Commandements*, will certainly hinder the ſpiritual and eternal advancement of all ſuch *Doctors of diſobedience*; for *Chriſt* who is the *truth it ſelf*, hath ſaid, *That he which teacheth others to break the leaſt of his Commandements, ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 26.

Yet have the aforeſaid *Tutors* ſhewed too much of the old *Serpents ſubtilty*, in teaching the *black Art* of breaking

all ſacred bonds and obligations whatſoever, and that under the notion of *ſatisfying* the *Conſciences*, and *reſolving* the ſcruples of ſuch who cannot ſwallow down this cammel of perjury as eaſily as themſelves.

That we might therefore be ſatisfied in our judgements, and reſolved in our Conſciences, about this great buſineſſe of *ſubſcribing* the *Engagement*. We have ſeriouſly viewed and weighed what hath been written by Mr. *Dury*. By the *Northern Subſcribers in the Plea*. In the *Engagement vindicated*. In the *Logicall Demonſtration of the lawfulneſſe of ſubſcribing the new Engagement*. And in the *Explanation of the Covenant*, *in reference to the taking the Engagement*, &c.

But finding all theſe *Pamphlets* to be full of *irreligious* and *irrational Arguments*, and not in the leaſt *ſatisfying* to any, except ſuch who are willing to *couzen* their *Conſciences*, we hold it our duty, the Lord *having lighted our Candle*, not *to put it under a buſhel*. But *publiſh* the grounds of our *diſſatisfaction with them all*. And eſpecially with Mr. *John Duries Conſiderations and juſt Repropoſals*, which [through their often printing or *impreſſion*] we fear hath taken too much impreſſion *upon weak and unſtable ſoules*: yet have we found them ſo full of contradictions, abſurdities, and irrationall reaſonings, vented with ſuch heights of Majeſterial confidence, or impudence, as makes us fear, that if ever he had any *miniſterial gifts or abilities*, they are, by the juſt judgement of God, *blaſted*, for undertaking a ſervice ſo *ſinfull*, as to render him *acceſſary* to the *perjury* of all thoſe perſons who have ſubſcribed the new ENGAGEMENT by his *perſwaſion*.

Although

Although therefore the *Reverend*, *Learned*, and *Conſcious Authours of the Propoſals*, nor any other of his own *Function* [as we conceive by their ſilence] will not ſo farre undervalue themſelves, or diſparage their Judgements by vouchſafing an Anſwer to his weak and worthleſſe Pamphlets, becauſe he hath ſo fully confuted himſelf in ſeveral places.

Yet leſt through the want of a *reply to them*, his *pupils* and *Proſelites*, ſhould take him for an infallible Oracle, an *irrefragable Doctor*, and ſo conclude their *Champion invincible*. Though in our own ſight we are but as *little David*, in compariſon of this great *Goliah*, for our ſcolaſtick parts, and *polemique abilities*. We have adventured to appear againſt him, after his *fourth Edition*, or appearance in the field *without oppoſition*. And whether we have not cut off the *head* of this *great Champion* with his *own Sword*, we leave to the judgement of the Reader and Spectator.

Be pleaſed alſo [Courteous Reader] to take notice, that had there been as free a paſſage for *Truth* as there is for *error*, and that the men of this *Generation* exceeded not the *Prelates* for their ſtrict ſuppreſſion of the *Preſſe*; we had not onely followed him at the *heeles of his firſt Edition*, but many more able *Combatants* had got through the *Preſſe* into the *field* againſt him, and long ſince laid him flat on his back, and broke the neck of his *printing pride*.

But ſeeing the *divine providence* hath through much *difficulty* brought this diſcourſe to thy hand, wherein we have *diſcharged our Conſciences* in a faithfull diſcovery

of

of the *unlawfulneſſe and inexpediency of ſubſcribing* this *new Engagement*, and have anſwered the moſt *material* paſſages *in Mr. DURIES Conſiderations and juſt Repropoſals*, to the contrary, in which is included an Anſwer to the other forenamed *Scriblers* after his Copy. We leave it to thy *ſerious peruſall*, beſeeching thee to *conſider what we have ſaid*; and the *good Lord*, who is the *Father of lights*, give thee *a diſcerning ſpirit* in theſe times, wherein men are *given up unto ſtrong deluſions for detaining the Truth in unrighteouſneſſe.*

Amen.

VALE.

A PACK OF PURITANS MAINTAINING

The unlawfulneſſe and inexpediency of ſubſcribing the *New Engagement*; and profeſſing the diſſatisfaction of their Judgements, and unreſolvedneſs of their tender Conſciences, with Mr. *John Dury* his CONSIDERATIONS and JUST RE-PROPOSALS concerning it.

THough we delight not to revive that odious, and reproachful name of *Puritan*, with which in the height of *Prelacy* and *Prerogative Royall*, and conſcientious men were ſtigmatized, that ſcrupled *Conformity* to ſuperſtitious *Innovations* in the *Church*, and oppoſed illegal *Taxations* and *Impoſitions* in the *State*.

Yet when we do conſider, how that all thoſe unhappy *Commotions* that have been in this *Kingdom*, to the ſubverſion of the *Government* both of *Church* and *State*, are charged upon *all the zealous Profeſſours* of the *Goſpel*, under the Notion of the *Puritan Faction*. Becauſe of the *unjuſtifiable* Proceedings of ſome, both againſt the *King* and the *Kingdom*; whoſe ſinnes (we profeſſe) have been, and ſtill are the matters of our *ſorrow* and *ſhame*.

Yet, leſt that all that do profeſſe the *Goſpel* of *Chriſt* in ſincerity, and are carefull to keep a good *Conſcience, void of offence, both towards God and Man*, ſhould for the *miſcarriages* of ſome *Profeſſours*, be condemned for *a Pack of ſedicious, diſſembling Hipocrites and* * *Knaves*;

* As they are in the Biſh of Dovvns Speech againſt Puritans, vvhich hath been publiſhed in ſeverall langnages to the vvorld.

We have choſen rather in theſe perillous Times, to profeſſe our ſelves *A Pack of Puritans*; and to teſtifie, that we are ſo far *from having any Fellowſhip with thoſe unfruitfull works of Darkneſſe*, which have been committed in the light of the Sunne, to the *diſhonour* of the *Goſpel*, that we do *reprove* them rather; and as an *evidence* of our diſlike of their *Tranſactions*, do publiſh the *Grounds* and *Reaſons* for our *non-ſubſcription* to this *new Engagement*, with them.

But before we begin, we ſhall, *as in the preſence of the Searcher of all hearts*, profeſſe and demonſtrate; That the *Grounds* of our devulging what we have conceived of the *unlawfulneſſe* and *unexpediency* of this *new Engagement*, negatively, are not, To create unneceſſary *Scruples* and *Fears*, in other mens heads and hearts, or factiouſly and maliciously to kindle a *fire* to deſtroy the cómmon welfare of this Land of our Nativity; but poſitively, according to
1. our duty as *Saints*, to *preſerve* the *ſouls* of our *Brethren* from the *ſhipwrack of a good Conſcience*, upon the Rockes of *ungteouſneſſe*,
2. *Diſloyalty* and *Perjury*. *In Mr. Dury's Dialect. Juſt. Repr. pag.* 20. *To uncaſe our ſelves and propound our Doubts*. By which, to *provoke* Mr. *Dury* or any other, to give better ſatisfaction to our *tender Conſciences*, than what we have yet received. And to *evidence* to
3. the World, that when we are called out to ſuffer *Proſcription* and *non-protection*, for our *non-ſubſcription*, we expoſe not our ſelves to ſuffering either through *ignorance* or *arroganze*; not becauſe we are *contentious*, but becauſe we are *conſcientious*, and dare not ſin to keep our ſelves from ſuffering.

We do indeed *profeſſe* to all the World, that when we parted ſo liberally with our *Eſtates to preſerve* our *Propriety* in them, as alſo to *purchaſe* that *Liberty* for our *Conſciences*, that nothing might be *urged* upon them *contrary to the revealed will of God*; we could not imagine that when we were delivered out of the danger of it, from our *profeſſed Enemies*, we ſhould be expoſed to it by our *profeſſed Friends*. But as now we ſee our folly, in looking *to live godly in Chriſt Jeſus*, without *Perſecution*, and to go to *Heaven* a new way, and *not through many tribulations*; ſo we do unfeignedly deſire to humble our ſelves under the *Almighty hand of our God*, who is pleaſed to *curſe* our *Bleſſings*, and to uſe thoſe as Rods in his hand for our *correction*; from whom we expected in our moſt *preciſe* and

circum-

circumspect walking, both countenance, incouragement, and protection. And now through the strength of *Christ* do resolve to deny our selves, to take up his *Crosse*, to suffer rather then sin.

We must needes say, that we are not in this juncture of time, without some suggestions from our very good *Friends*, and near Relations; as our *Saviour* had sometimes from *Peter*, for to *spare* and *pitty* our selves, that none of those miserable Evils may come upon Us, our Wives, and Children, which necessarily will be the fruit of our *non subscription*.

And would we be guided by *President* rather than by *Precept*, we have the Examples of too many *Professours* before us; That to keep themselves from the *Winde* of *Persecution*, and *Affliction*, for keeping a good *Conscience*, can set their *Consciences* as *Diogenes* boasted, he could set his *Barrell* in which he lived, *any way to keep out the Winde*. But we have learned to be Followers of others (though eminent for *Profession*) no further then they are followers of *Christ Jesus*: who though he knew how much it would prejudice him, not to comply with the *Pharisees*, in a seeming civil Action of *washing his hands*, yet he not onely refused it, but *reproved* it, as the *Scriptures* testifie. *Mat.* 15. 2. 11.

But this being our indispensible Duty, *To have no fellowship with the unfruitfull works of darknesse*; not *to consent with sinners when they entice us*: neither *to say*, *a Confederacy*, *a Confederacy*, with them, though they should enforce us. *Mark* 7. 5. *Ephes.* 5. 11.

We dare not through a base and slavish *fear of men* be drawn into *a sinfull Engagement*, or *Confederacy* with them; and that *not onely* lest we should *thereby partake of their sinnes*, and so *of their punishments*: but also lest that we should *dishonour* our most *holy Profession*, and testifie that we are *such* as do *fear them that can kill the body*, more than *him that can cast both body and soul into Hell-fire*. Such as have but little love unto our *Lord* and *Master*, and therefore had rather that his *Gospel* should *suffer*, than our selves; such as have but little *Faith* in Gods *All-sufficiency*, and therefore will use sinfull *shifts* to *preserve* our selves from a suffering condition; such as are *inordinate lovers of our selves*, *and of the Word*. And that we answer not the end of our *Redemption through the pretious blood of Jesus Christ*, *Who hath bought us with a price*, that we should *Prov.* 1. 10. *Isai* 8. 12. *Rev.* 18. 4. 1 *Thes.* 4. 1. *Mal.* 10. 28. 1 *Cor.* 7. 23.

1 *Cor.* 7. 23. not be the ſinfull *Servants* of Men, by any ſinfull Compliance whatſoever.

Upon all which *Premiſes*, which we have ſeriouſly weighed in our moſt deliberate thoughts, and have cloſely laid to our awakened Conſciences: we muſt *profeſſe*, that we cannot we dare not, by *Subſcription*, or any other way whatſoever, teſtifie our *aſſent* unto any ſinful *Engagement* or *Confederacy*.

Object. Now, becauſe that we know it will be here objected. What? Do you look upon this *Engagement* impoſed by the ſupream Authority of the Nation, *viz. To be true and faithfull to the Commonwealth of* England, *as it is now eſtabliſhed, without a King and Houſe of Lords*: as a ſinfull *Engagement*? If you conſult with *Mr. John Dury*, you ſhall finde, that to *ſubſcribe* this *Engagement* is an *indiſpenſible Duty*, and that you are bound to ſubſcribe it by your *Covenant*, and other ſacred Oaths which you have taken (*viz. Conſider. concerning the preſent Engagement, pag.* 16. *line* 17. *pag.* 6. *line* 18 *pag.* 9. *line* 23.)

For anſwer to this, We do in the ſincerity of our hearts *profeſſe*, That we ſhould have looked upon it as matter of much complacency and joy, (both in relation to other mens ſins, and our own ſufferings) if we could have found *Mr. Dury's Confirmations* to have been as clear, as his *Affirmations* are confident; and that upon our ſerious ſearch that we have made into this preſent *Engagement*, we could have given as fair a *Character* of it, as the *Apoſtle* doth of the *Commandement*; That it is *holy, juſt, and good.*

But ſeeing to the grief of our hearts, we have found it otherwiſe; and that therefore we cannot *ſubſcribe* it without *wounding our Conſciences*; we ſhall for the Reaſons already propounded, demonſtrate the *Grounds* upon which this preſent *Engagement* appeares unto us to be both *unlawfull* and *unexpedient.*

To this purpoſe, we ſhall do theſe two things:

Firſt, Propoſe as conſiderable; When Engagements, and what Engagements in general are ſinfull.

Secondly, Expoſe this particular Engagements to Examination; whether ſinfull or no, by the aforeſaid Conſideration.

For the clearing of the former; *what Engagements, or When Engagements, or Confederacies are ſinfull.* We conceive that to be engaged

gaged, or to engage our ſelves, or to be in *Confederacy* with others, is not ſimply ſinfull in it ſelfe; but according as it is *circumſtantiated*, it may not onely be ſinfull, but be very much *aggravated*. For although *Circumſtances* are *inconſiderable* in Relation unto *naturall* bodies in *Philoſophy*: yet even *Circumſtances*, they are the *Eſſentials* of *morall* Actions in *Theology*, and they do give the *formality* of *morall* good or evill, to ſuch things or Actions which are in their own *Nature* but *indifferent*.

If it be demanded, *What are thoſe Circumſtances which make Engagements ſinfull?* *Object.*

We anſwer, that though there be but two *Circumſtances* in all *naturall* things, the *ubi* and the *quando*. Every created *Natural* being, is ſomewhere, and at ſometime: yet in *Morality* there are more, as the *quis*, *quid*, *ubi*, *quibus atque cui*, *cur*, *quomodo*, *quando*. *Anſwer.*

Moſt of which *Circumſtances*, applied to *Engagements* in *general*, will render them to be exceeding ſinfull: if we do conſider either the *quis*, who it is that doth *engage* himſelfe or others; the *quid*, the matter of the *Engagement* it ſelfe; the *quibus atque cui*, the Perſons with whom, or to whom we do *engage* our ſelves; the *cur*, the end wherefore we do enter ſuch *Engagements*; and the *quomodo*, the manner of our entering into *Engagements* and *Confederacies*.

Now here, as we are *Bible-bearing Puritans*, we could at large demonſtrate from the *Scriptures*, *Engagements* to be ſinfull for the *quid*, or the matter of them, when they are not onely unlawfull, but inexpedient. To be ſinfull in reſpect of the *quis* and *quibus*, when if a publick *Engagement* be *preſcribed* by thoſe who have no lawfull *Authority* over them that are to *ſubſcribe*, or when *ſubſcribed* by thoſe who have no power over themſelves, becauſe *preengaged* already. To be ſinfull in regard of the *cur* or the *quare*, The end wherefore we enter into ſuch *Engagements* and *Confederacies*; as when 'tis to *confirme* and *ratifie* former Acts of *Oppreſſion*, *Injuſtice*, and *Cruelty*, and is not like to be an end of *ſtrife* and *contention*, but rather to make *ſtrife* and *contention* to be endleſſe. And alſo in reſpect of the *manner* of *Engaging*, when we do it *raſhly* without taking counſel of God, *incautelouſly* without ſerious and mature deliberation with our ſelves, *ignorantly* without true

Matth. 14. 7. *Matth.* 26. 72. *Acts* 23. 21. 2 *Sam.* 15. 12. *Num.* 30 *Joſh.* 2. 17. *Eccleſ.* 9. 2. *Gen.* 5. 8. 24.

Rom. 14 13. information of the nature of it, and *doubtingly*, without full satisfaction to our Consciences, of the lawfulneſſe of it.

But we conceive that by this light touch in *tranſitu*, we have ſufficiently demonſtrated what we propoſed in the firſt place; to wit, *when* or *what Engagements in generall* are ſinfull.

Now therefore that we or others may not enter upon this preſent *engagement ignorantly, raſhly, doubtingly*, or *incantelouſly*, we ſhall proceed to *expoſe* this *particular Engagement*, which is to be *impoſed* upon us unto the *tryal*, by thoſe *Circumſtances* we have already tendred to *Conſideration*; which do render *engagements to be ſinfull.*

In the firſt place therefore, we ſhall conſider of the *quid* or the *matter* of this preſent *Abſolute*, and *poſitive Promiſe* or *Engagement. To be true and faithfull to the Common-Wealth of* England, *as it is now eſtabliſhed without a King or Houſe of Lords.*

But before we come to determine of the *matter* of this *engagement*, whether it be *unlawfull* or *unexpedient*, we ſhall briefly reſolve this Queſtion:

When an Act may be concluded to be unlawfull or unexpedient?

Anſw. For *Anſwer* to this in ſhort; A thing is then materially *unlawfull*, when *contrary* unto the *holy Law of God, the Rule of Perfection* revealed in the *Scriptures*: or ſecondly, when *contrary* unto ſuch wholeſome and truely conſtituted *Laws of the land* in vvhich vve live, vvhich are nor *repugnant* to the *Laws of God.* And a thing is then *unexpedient* (though *lawfull*) when either we cannot come to the *Good* in it, unleſſe vve do that vvhich is *evill*; or when the thing *done* or to be *done*, is not like to *bring* **Glory to God*, and his *Goſpel*, *advantage* to others, or *benefit* to our own ſelves.

* Mr. Crad. *Goſp. liberty*, 63. &c.

Novv this being *premiſed*, vve muſt needs conclude, till better informed, notwithſtanding what we have from Mr. *Dury*, That to *engage* our ſelves to be *true and faithfull to the Common wealth of England*, is ſinfull, becauſe *unlawfull*, in ſome kind in both ſenſes; as *contrary* to the *wholeſome Laws of this Kingdom*, agreeing vvith the *word of God* and ſo conſequentially *contrary* to the *Law of God* alſo.

We finde indeed Mr. *Dury* often mentioning the *Common-wealth* in his Diſcourſe *p.* 4, 6, to which he ſaith, *We are bound to be true and faithfull.*

Novv

Now as we apprehend his meaning by the *Common-wealth*, to be the *welfare* of all *degrees* and *conditions* of men within the three Kingdoms, which is implyed in severall passages of his, when he saith, *The Common-wealth was in the bosome of the Kingdom, and intrinsicall with it.* We conceive it not simply *unlawfull, faithfully* to seek its *Welfare*. But it is *evident* both by the *Preface* to the Act *imposing*, and also by the *expresse Letter* of the *engagement*, that by the *Common-wealth*, is meant *A State of Government* contradistinct unto *Manarchy*; *Without a* KING *and House of Lords.*

From M. Dury's Pen. Repro. p. 13.

Now under this *consideration*, the *matter* of the *Engagement* appeares *unlawfull*; and that first, because we are told by the skilfull in Law, *It is absolutely against the Laws of the Land.* For by this *Engagement* to the *Common-wealth*, we oblige our selves to yield that *fealty* and *homage* to our *fellow-Subjects*, which is due unto the King onely, as is very clear, in *Cooke Instit. p.* 64.65. 66.67. And therefore is no lesse than *Treason* within the *Statute of* 25. *Edw.* 3. *chap.* 2.

Secondly, *engaging* to the *Common-wealth* as a *Government*, is consequentially *unlawfull*, by the *Law of God*, because it tends to the *abolishing* of a long setled *Government* amongst us by the *Law of the Land*, which is also agreeable, and no way contrary unto the *Law of God*, but rather *Gods especiall Ordinance, Deut.* 17.14.15. *Prov.* 15.16. prophecied of and promised as a great blessing to the Church in *Gospel* times. To which *Kingly Government*, we are not onely obliged, *to submit for the Lords sake, as agreeable to his will*, 1 *Pet.* 13.14.15.17. but also *to pray for it in the first place* 1 *Tim.* 6.15. *That under it, we may lead a peaceable life, in all godlinesse and honesty.*

But in the next place, suppose that this *Engagement* for the *matter* were *lawfull*, yet if the *matter* of it appear *unexpedient*, there will be *Ground* enough for us that do *professe* the *Gospel*, to take heed of *subscribing it*; such as we are, must be carefull that what we do *hath no appearance of evill in it, that it be honest in the sight of all men, that it be of good report*; that what we do for the *matter* of it be not onely *lawfull*, but *expedient*; 1 *Cor.* 10.23. That what we do may bring *Glory to God, Honour to the Gospel, advantage to others, and benefit to our selves*; and that for the obtaining of that which is

good

Good and *lawfull*, we do not that which is *ſinfull* and *evill*.

Now the *matter* of the *Engagement* being brought unto this *Triall*, will not onely appear *unlawfull* but *inexpedient*, To *engage* our ſelves to be true and faithfull to the *Common-Wealth* as now eſtabliſhed.

For firſt, ſuppoſe to *aboliſh Monarchy*, and *to be faithfull to the Common-Wealth as now eſtabliſhed* were *lawfull*, yet conſidering we cannot come at it without manifeſt *Perjury* (of which more by and by) to our ſelves, and by giving our *conſent* to all thoſe ſinfull and indirect meanes, by which the ſaid *Government* was founded, and to this day ſupported; it muſt needs be *inexpedient* for us to *ſubſcribe* it, and we cannot do it without being *acceſſary* unto the ſins of *others*.

How Mr. *Dury* hath anſwered this *materiall Argument* againſt the *Engagement*, as we finde [illegible]isfaction to our *Conſciences* in it, ſo we leave it to the judgement of his beſt Friends, whether it will paſſe for the appearance of Anſwer; for ſaith he, *Pag. 6. l. 1. Here I perceive is the thing which doth pinch you in the buſineſſe, you thinke that they that made the change in Government, broke the Covenant, and if you engage under this change, you break your Covenant alſo, and make your ſelfe acceſſary to their guilt, Pa. 5 li. ult.* To which I ſhall ſay, that *I ſee not how it will appear, that the conſequence at all doth follow, although they that made the change ſhould be guilty.*

Now had Mr. *Dury* given any Argument or Scripture ground to ſatisfie us or any other, we ſhould have rejoyced in the ſight of it. But becauſe Mr. *Dury* is ſo dim-ſighted, and cannot ſee how ſuch a *Conſequence* will follow, *That if we do ſubſcribe this Engagement*, we ſhall make our ſelves *acceſſary* unto the ſinnes of others, we will help him to a little ſpirituall eye-ſalve in theſe following *Reaſons* or *Arguments*: Firſt, *if* to bid others *God ſpeed* in an evill Work, makes us *Partakers of their ſinnes*, 2 *John* 5.11. And to have a hand unadviſedly in bringing in an unworthy *Perſon* into a publike Office, makes us *Partakers* of thoſe ſinnes they ſhall commit in it, as the *Apoſtle* implies, 1 *Tim.* 5.22. Then deliberately *to engage* our ſelves to the ſupport of this *Government* ſinfully eſtabliſhed, muſt needs make us *acceſſary* to the ſinnes of others in it, it being the higheſt *Conſent* with others in ſin that can be.

Secondly,

Secondly, If to allow of the ſinfull waies of others, onely by our *preſence* with them, involves us in their guilt, *Acts* 22.20. And to *favour* thoſe that do *evil*, be as great a *crime*, as to commit the ſin it ſelf, *Becauſe it makes our damnation juſt*, *Rom.* 1.32. Then to *ſubſcribe* this *Engagement*, with teſtifies our *approbation* of the eſtabliſhed *Government*, which the means by which it was effected, &c. muſt needs make us *acceſſary* to the ſins of others.

Now therefore, ſeeing that without ſinning our ſelves, and contracting the guilt of other mens ſinnes, we cannot *ſubſcribe* upon that *account*, though the *matter* of the *Engagement* ſhould be *lawfull*, yet it is *inexpedient*; We cannot come to *enjoy* it without *committing of evill*.

But ſuppoſe in reſpect of the *quid*, or the *matter* of the *Engagement*; that it were not *unlawfull*, to *engage* our ſelves to the *Government* of a *Common-wealth*, in *oppoſition* to *Monarchy*, nor yet *inexpedient* upon the *former Ground*.

Yet if it appeare ſo upon the *latter*, that the *ſubſcribing* of the *Engagement* be like to be ſo farre from bringing *honour* to the *Goſpel*, *advantage* to others, and *profit* to our ſelves, that the *fruits* of it are like to be otherwiſe altogether. It will be *inexpedient* for us to *ſubſcribe*, and conſequently ſinfull.

Now that we may not with M. *Dury* confidently affirme, but *prove nothing* (as he doth, p.18.) about the *expediency* of the *Engagement*, that it is a duty that relates *to the whole Comon-wealth, the ſafety of all, and our owne neceſſary Peace and Preſervation*, lin. 35. We ſhall not onely *affirme*, that *to ſubſcribe* this *Engagement* will be *inexpedient*, as it will bring forth *dishonour* and a ſcandall upon the *Goſpel*. Secondly, extreame perill and prejudice *to the whole Common-wealth*. Thirdly, unconceivable damage unto every particular *Subſcriber*; but we ſhall *confirme* it by many cleare and evident *demonſtrations*.

First, *to ſubſcribe* this *Engagement* for to eſtabliſh a *Polarchy* or *Popular Government*, and *to aboliſh Royall Dignity*, will be ſo farre from *honouring the Goſpel*, as that we ſhall bring a great ſcandall upon it, *and dishonor our moſt holy Profeſſion*. And that firſt, as it will juſtifie all thoſe who have been *accounted* Traducers of *Puritans*, *enemies to Monarchy*, that this was looked upon as an intolerable

 calumny

calumny, we finde in Mr. *Caſe* his *Sermon before the Houſe of Commons*, 26. *Octob.* 1642. pag. 11, 12. where he hath theſe words, *It is and hath been from ancient times the curſed Policy of deſperate malignant Courtiers and Counſellers, When they would arme Princes & Potentates againſt the poore People of God, to poſſeſſe their eares and hearts with this prejudice, That they are enemies to Monarchy. And* ſaith he, *Doth not theſe* Rehums *and* Shimſhies *fill our Kings royall eares with this* odium, *that the Parliament and Puritans are enemies to Monarchy, and intend nothing but to bring all into a Parity, and after they have pulled downe Biſhop, then downe with King too; with a world of ſuch Calumnies invented by the Father of Lyes.*

But now to *ſubſcribe* this *Engagement* againſt *Monarchy*, would make it appear, that ſuch *Aſſertions* were no unjuſt *aſperſions*. But that they ſaid truly in charging *Puritans* with *a deſigne of altering, and ſubverting the Government of the Kingdome.*

Secondly, the *ſubſcribing* of the *Engagement* would *diſhonour* the *Goſpel*; as it would bring an odious ſcandall upon the *Worke of Reformation* in the Church to which we are by *Covenant* obliged. And that, as it would ratifie a Prelaticall *Aphoriſme*, which we alwaies looked upon as a ſtumbling block in the way, deviſed to hinder the *Reformation of the Church*, *No Biſhop no King, no Miter no Scepter.* As if ſo be, there could be no reall *Reformation* in the Church, without *Regall extirpation* in the State.

But thirdly, to *ſubſcribe* this *Engagement* will be *inexpedient* & ſcandalous, as it may *nullifie* all thoſe *Apologies* which have been made in the behalfe of *Profeſſours*: that much hath been ſaid for them is very evident, as by many publike Writings * for their vindication, *That the Miniſters and People falſly called Puritans, were injuriouſly ſtandered, for enemies to Regall Government, and for Troublers of the State.* So that, by what hath been from time to time ſolemnly profeſſed by the *zealous Deſirers of Reformation*, when calumniated by the Prelates: but now for ſuch to *ſubſcribe* this *Engagement*, the end whereof is Eradication of *Monarchicall Government*, will render all thoſe *Apologies* to be falſe and hypocriticall, and void; and that what was then ſaid in their behalfs, was onely to keep them from cruſhing, till they had ability or an opportunity to turne the Kingdome upſide downe.

* *A plea for the Innocent, in Qu. Eliz: time, 1602*

A Vindication of Puritans, 1641.

So

So that now, upon theſe *Conſiderations* it is evident, that to *ſubſcribe* this *Engagement* would be *inexpedient*, as it would bring *diſhonour* to the *Goſpel*, and a great ſcandall upon the *zealous Profeſſours of Religion*, and them onely.

But in the next place, as we cannot *ſubſcribe* without much *diſhonour to God, the Goſpel and Religion we profeſſe*. Secondly, not without extreame perill and prejudice unto the whole *Commonwealth*, unto all *degrees*, *ranks*, and *conditions* of men in the three *Kingdomes*: firſt, *to ſubſcribe, To be true and faithfull to the Cõmonwealth as now eſtabliſhed without a King*, would be extreamly injurious and prejudiciall unto the *ſupreme Magiſtrate of the Kingdome*, who notwithſtanding his *forcible expulſion* and *diſ-poſſeſſion* is not *deveſted* of that *Right* and *Title* he hath unto the *Engliſh Throne*. Now if it were a ſinne ſo *provoking* in a *King*, *for to take away his Subjects Vine-yard*, becauſe *the inheritance of his Father*: What is it then for a *Subject to take away the inheritance of a King from him*? which is *vertually done*, in taking this *Engagement*.

Secondly, to ſubſcribe this Engagement, to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth as now eſtabliſhed, *without an Houſe of Lords*; would be prejudicious and injurious to the Nobles of the Land, and deprive them of their *Birth-rights*: which is to ſit in *Parliament*, and as one of the three Eſtates, to be *Legiſlators*, and co-ordinate with King and Commons. Now, by *ſubſcribing this Engagement*, we diſ-inherit and diſ ſeize them of their *Right*, and that with the greateſt wrong and injuſtice that may be; becauſe, *excluding without a lawfull judgment, or Triall*.

Thirdly, to ſubſcribe *to be true and faithfull to the Cõmon-wealth*, as a *Government contradiſtinct* unto *Monarchy* will be *inexpedient*; becauſe not onely unprofitable, but prejudiciall, perilous, and of dangerous conſequence to the whole *Cõmon-wealth* in generall; For, upon the former grounds, the *Heire and Succeſſour*, with the *Nobility of the Land*, being thus *unjuſtly* and *violently* diſpoſſeſt of *their right*, and barracado'd from *re-entring* by this *ſinfull Engagement*; it muſt needs bring upon the *Kingdome* not onely a *privation* of that *honour* and *reputation* which we had with other Kingdomes, making us who were the *Head*, the chief among the Princes to become the *Tail*, the *puniеſt State in Chriſtendome*, *diſſolving*

all thoſe antient Leagues which were made with forraign Princes for the Kingdomes good ; and alſo *the union between the* 3 Kingdomes of *England, Scotland,* and *Ireland.* But will *poſitively* involve us in *perpetuall Wars* and *Troubles.* And through the maintenance of Armies, by *intolerable Taxes* and *Impoſitions (tranſcendently* exceeding all former *Monopolies* and *Ship-money)* render us the miſerableſt and ſlaviſheſt People under Heaven ; ſuch as ſhall never know when we are ſecure, either in reſpect of our *ſoule, body,* or *eſtate:* for as we find by experience, in reference *to Impoſitions upon our Eſtates, that ſince the promiſe of Liberty to the People;* whereas in the Kings time *that Dutch Devil of Exciſe was but attempted to be conjured up amongſt us, in the Rule of the* Keepers *of our Liberties, it hath not onely been impoſed, but in ſome things doubled and trebled;* ſo in reference *to impoſitions upon the conſcience.* Though at firſt the *Engagement* againſt *Monarchy* was onely *impoſed* upon the *Creatures, that divided the ſpoil of the* Kingdome, and were in Offices of profit ; yet it ſtaies not there, but is now *to be enforced upon all.* And what great *augur* this little *Wimble* muſt make way for, as we know not, ſo peradventure not they themſelves, whom by this *ſubſcription* we ſhould *conſtitute* to be our *new* and *abſolute Governours.* For as *neceſſity* hath put them upon *taking away the Life of the Father of our Countrey* ; ſo it may inforce them *to impoſe* upon us *the Murder* of our owne *naturall* and *ſpirituall Parents,* if they will not comply, and be in Confederacy with them.

But beſides all theſe, with many other Miſeries which are like to come upon the *Common Wealth,* with thoſe horrid Injuries to the *Chief* and *moſt noble Parts of the Body Politique,* by *ſubſcribing* this *Engagement.*

In the third place, it will be ſo farre from procuring Peace and Preſervation to every particular *Subſcriber,* as M. *Dury* hath affirmed, pag. 18. *That it Will bring unconceivable detriment and damage unto every individuall Subſcriber thereof.* And that not onely as ſhall be *inſtrumentall,* in *putting on the yoak of intolerable ſlavery upon his own neck With his own hands,* but alſo of *rivetting* it faſt (by *the abſolute and unlimited Engagement*) from falling off. And as he ſhall by his *tranſcendent Perjury* expoſe himſelfe and *Poſterity* to perpetuall Infamy, *to the ruine of the outward man.* But as he ſhall deprive

deprive himselfe of *the inward Peace and tranquility of a good Conscience*, (and as it is reported of some *Subscribers* of this *engagement* already) be filled with *life extinguishing* horrors and terrors of *Conscience*. Besides the hazard of *damnation to the immortall Soul*, by *subscribing* unto an *engagement*, which for the *matter* of it is so *contrary unto the Law of God, and of the Land*, and through its *inexpediency* so scandalous, injurious, and perillous, as it appeares to be.

Object. But to all this it may be objected *That if there were no alleviation, or palliation of what hath been propounded about the seeming unlawfulnesse and inexpediency of this* Engagement *for the matter of it, by the* Supreme Authority *of the Power of imposing this* Engagement, *It would be then most* dangerous *and dreadfull to* subscribe: *but the* Authority *imposing this* Engagement *have legislative Power, not onely to declare what is lawfull, but to make things which are only of an humane concernment, to be lawfull and warrantable.*

Answ. Now in *Answer* to this *Objection*, we shall fall upon the *Consideration* of the second particular *Circumstance*, which we propounded for the discovery of the sinfulnesse of an *engagement*, and that is the *quis*, relating to *the Persons engaging* or *to be engaged.*

But before that we begin to consider of the *quis*, in relation to the power *imposing the engagement*, we shal a little examine what is said by *Mr. Dury*, against this present practice of ours; *For* (saith he, *pag.* 9, 10.) *as concerning the present Power, by which the* Engagement *is tendered, Whether it be an usurped power*; he affirmes, *it doth not belong unto us to judge definitively of the right which the Supreme Power over us in the world pretend to have unto their places; and the Reason* (saith he) *is this, because I finde it no part of the Profession of Christianity to meddle with this matter; nor do I see that God doth allow private men to take so much upon them over their Superiours* &c.

Now for *Answer* to this, in the first place, by way of Concession; though we grant, *that in a constituted government* of as long standing as *Monnrchy* hath been in *Brittain*, which hath beene *upon Record* 441. yeares before the *Incarnation* of *Christ*; as we finde proved by a *Speech* delivered in *Parliament*, *May* 24. 1641. and made so glorious and unquestionable by Antiquity: as when conquered by *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, yet had their *Laws* and

Captain *Audley Mervin's* Speech.

Government unaltered ; as we finde in the *Lord Keepers Speech, Novemb.* 3. 1640. Though under such a long continued *Government* derived to us by our *Ancestours.* For a Subject by Birth to question the *Right* or *Authority* of the *Supreme Magistrate* commanding, *We cannot see that God doth allow private men to take so much upon them over their Superiours*, because their *Authority* is beyond all dispute.

Yet when a *Government* is to be *settled* and *constituted*, while the *Change* of so long an *established Government* is before our faces, and that by a Power so *disputable* as this is ; it is our duty, and we are bound as *Christians*, by the *Word* of *Life*, before we do *engage* our selves to be in *subjection* to any such Power, to satisfie our selves concerning thei[r] *lawfull Authority* to rule over us. For though as *Mr. Dury* doth urge, that the Rule of *Subjects* behaviour, as *Subjects*, is clearly determined, *Rom.* 13. 1. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14. *Tit.* 3. 1. *To be for conscience sake, and because Gods Ordinance, pa.* 11. yet we *conceive* that *Tyranny and Usurpation* is none of Gods *Ordinance* ; and it *concernes Christians* to be satisfied whether it be *to a lawfull Magistrate* they do *engage* themselves, or unto *Jacke Straw*, or *John* of *Leyden* ; and this we are to do in obedience to Gods Command, by which we are obliged to yeeld *Obedience to the lawfull Magistrate, Commandment* the *fifth.* But also *forbidden to engage* our selves to *Obedience* and *Allegiance* to those that are no *lawfull Magistrates.* For this is one Rule given by all *Divines*, in expounding the *morall Law*, That *positive Precepts* doe imply and injoyn *negative Duties*, as we must *honour our Fathers*, and *Governours*, with the honour of *Obedience* and *Allegiance* ; so we are by the same *Precept forbidden* to honour such as are not our *lawfull Rulers* and Governours, but *Usurpers.* When the *Princes* of *Israel* are like unto them that remove, *Hos.* 5. 10. We must take heed of *Walking willingly after their commandment with Ephraim*, *vers.* 11. lest when we are oppressed and broken in judgement, we may thanke our selves.

And now having thus cleared the way to our Worke, and having made it appeare to be our duty in this juncture of time, though *private Persons*, to question the *quis* or the *Authority* of the *Prescribers of this present Engagement.*

We

We ſhould proceed to *diſcover* the *Grounds* of our *diſ-ſatis-faction* about *ſubſcribing the Engagement*, in relation to the *quis*, the *Perſons preſcribing*, or *impoſing* it. But knowing the *Times* to be ſo very *perillous*, that we muſt be made offenders for a word, and that to ſpeak *truth* and *reaſon*, is like to be adjudged *Treaſon*.

We ſhall onely ſay, that if in *Utopia*, the *Supreme Authority* ſhould conſiſt of *three Eſtates in Senate*, aſſembled; a *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*, (though *engaged* by ſeverall *ſacred Obligations*, to preſerve the ſaid *Supreme Authority*,) ſhould by the aſſiſtance of a *rebellious* Army raiſed for the defence thereof, *exclude* the *major* part of the ſaid *Commons*, and having *declared* themſelves *The only Supreme Authority of Utopia*, ſhould deſtroy and take away the life of *their King*, *and aboliſh both the Eſtates of King and Lords*; and although by the knowne Law of *Utopia*, the ſaid *Commons* have no power *to impoſe* upon the ſaid *Utopians* (*pre-engaged* to be true and faithfull to the *King*, *his heirs*, *ſucceſſours*, *and kingly government*) an *Oath* or *Engagement*, *To be true to their New Government eſtabliſhed*, *without a King or Houſe of Lords*, though it hath been done *by force*, and without *their conſent*.

In this caſe, we may boldly ſay, that the ſaid *engagement*, in relation to the *quis*, the *Preſcribers* or *Impoſers* of it, is altogether *unlawfull*; and that becauſe the *Engagers* of the ſaid *Utopians*, are onely a *ſelf-created Power*, and ſo far, from being *The Supreme Authority of that Nation*, which conſiſts of *three Eſtates*, as that they are not a *third* part of one of them, *the Commons*; and alſo ſo farre from having any *Authority to impoſe* the ſaid *engagement* upon their fellow *Subjects*, as that they have no *Authority* by the *Utopian* Law to adminiſter any *Oath whatſoever*. And if ſo, then not to *impoſe an Oath* or *engagement* for fealty to themſelves, contrary to all thoſe *ſacred Obligations*, by which they were bound *to preſerve the ſaid Supreme Authority*.

But in reference to our *own caſe*, to ſay any thing concerning the *Authority of the Impoſers* of this preſent *engagement*, our mouthes being *gagged* by two ſtrong *Inſtruments* made this laſt yeer, *we cannot*. And therefore paſſing over the *conſideration* of the *quis*, in relation to the *Preſcribers*, we ſhal come to conſider of the ſecond *Particular*, propoſed in reference to the *quis*, as it relates to the

Perſons

Perſons to be *engaged*, which are the *Subſcribers*.

As publike *Oaths* and *engagements* cannot be *preſcribed, or lawfully impoſed*, by thoſe who have no power over *others*; ſo they cannot *lawfully be ſubſcribed* by thoſe who have no power over themſelves. *Qui non eſt ſui juris, obligare ſe non poteſt.* Which is the *condition* of all perſons *pre-engaged* by former *Oaths* and *Obligations*.

Now that this is the caſe of the whole Kingdom. If the *Oaths* of our *Anceſtours* binde us as it did *Saul*, for the breach whereof God dealt ſo ſeverely with his Family: or at leaſt, of all thoſe that ever *tooke*, either the *Oaths* of *Supremacy*, *Allegiance*, or of a *Freeman*, the *Proteſtation*, or the *Covenant*, we ſhall *demonſtrate* in the proving of theſe two *Aſſertions*.

Firſt, that this preſent *engagement* is *contradictory*, and ſtrongly *militates* againſt the *Oaths* of *Supreamacy*, *Allegiance*, and all thoſe *ſacred Obligations* before mentioned.

Secondly, that theſe *ſacred Oathes* and *Obligations* are ſtill binding the *Conſciences* of thoſe that have taken them.

Firſt, the *matter* of the *engagement*, which is *to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth* in oppoſition to *Monarchy*, *Without a King and Houſe of Lords*, is expreſly contrary unto the *Oath* of *Allegiance*, which obligeth the Taker, not only *to bear faith and Allegiance to the heirs and ſucceſſours* of our late King, (of which more in another place) but alſo *to defend their Crown and Dignity againſt all Conſpiracies*, which muſt needs be *monarchicall* and *kingly Government*; becauſe that *to defend their Crown or dignity*, is expreſſed *diſtinctly* from their *Perſons*. So that to *engage* againſt *kingly Government*, is *point blanke* contrary unto the *Oath* of *Allegiance*.

Secondly, the *matter* of the *engagement*, is contrary unto the *Oath* of *Supremacy*, which bindes the Taker clearly and plainly, not onely *to bear faith and true Allegiance to the Kings Highneſſe, his Heires, and Succeſſours; but to their power, to aſſiſt and defend all Juriſdidictions, Priviledges, Preheminences, and Authorities granted* unto the Kings Highneſſe his Heires, and Succeſſours, or *united and annexed to the Imperiall Crown of this Realme*.

But now to *eſtabliſh Polarchy*, and to *aboliſh Monarchy*, and to our power to *aſſiſt* and *defend all Juriſdictions, Priviledges, Preheminences,*

minences & Authorities, united or *annexed* to the *Imperiall Crowne*, are as contrary as darkneſſe is to light.

Thirdly, it is contrary to the Oath of a *Free-man* of *London*, which obligeth the Taker to be *faithfull* to ſuch *Heires & Succeſſours* onely, as ſhould weare the *Imperiall Crowne*, deſcribing them either to be Kings or Queens. So that, though the *Impoſers* of the *Engagement* ſhould require our *Allegiance*, becauſe *de facto* they are the Kings *Succeſſours* in *Government*, yet being neither *Kings* nor *Queens*, we ſhould violate this *ſacred* Oath by this *Engagement*.

Fourthly, the *matter* of this *Engagement*, as unto a *Common-wealth* without a *King*, is *contrary* unto our moſt *Solemne Vow* and *Proteſtation*, *May* 5. 1641. In which we have *promiſed* and *vowed*, unto *Almighty God*, *with our Lives, our Power and Eſtates, to maintain and defend*, not onely the King's *Perſon*, but his *Honour* and *Eſtate*; which *Eſtate* is not *perſonally* to be conſidered, but *politiquely* in relation to his *Government*; becauſe the defence of his *Perſon* is expreſly provided for in the ſaid *Vow*. Secondly, it is *contrary* unto this *Vow* and *Proteſtation*, by which we are *ſolemnly obliged to maintaine the Power and Priviledges of Parliament*. Now it is the *unqueſtionable power and priviledge* of the *Parliament*, to have the King, if not *perſonally*, yet *legally* and *politically* preſent. And, it is his *honour* and *eſtate*, which by our *Proteſtation* we have *promiſed to maintaine and defend*, to be the *Supreme Eſtate*, in that *high Court* of *Parliament*.

Fiftly, the *matter* of the *Engagement*, as unto a *Common-wealth* without a *King*, is expreſly *contrary* unto the *Solemn Covenant* we have taken: wherein we *engaged ſincerely, really*, and *conſtantly to endeavour*, and that with our *Lives* and *Eſtates to defend* and *preſerve* not onely the Kings *Perſon*, but his *Authority*. But now to be *true and faithfull to a Common-wealth, contradiſtinct unto Regall Authority*, and with our *Lives* and *Eſtates to defend the Kings Authority*, are the greateſt *contradictions* that can be. *Art.* 3.

Sixtly, *to be true and faithfull to the Common-Wealth, as now eſtabliſhed without the Houſe of Lords*, is expreſly *contrary* not onely to our aforeſaid *Nationall Covenant*, but to our *Promiſe, Vow*, & *Proteſtation*, of *May* 5. 1641. As being *engaged* by it *to maintaine and*

defend

defend the Power and Priviledges of Parliament, and by the *Covenant*, *to preserve the Rights and Priviledges of Parliament*. Now it being the *Right, Power, and Priviledge of Parliament*, to have the *House of Lords* as the onely *Judicature* in that *Supreme Councell*. But *to subscribe* the said *Engagement* is neither *to maintaine, defend, or preserve this undoubted Right, and Priviledge*; but to give our *consent* to their *extirpation*.

Seventhly, *to be true and faithfull to the Common-Wealth, as it is now established*, in a *violent* and *forcible way*, without the *lawfull* & *free consent* of the People, *is contrary* unto that part of our *Protestation* and *Covenant* which engageth us (in the former) *to defend the lawfull Right and Liberty of the Subject*, and *to oppose* all such as shall by *force or conspiracy* doe any thing to the *contrary*, (and in the latter) *to preserve the Liberties of the Kingdome*, of the *Right* of the *Subject* is to be *free*, not onely from all *Impositions* upon their *Estates*, (without their consent) but also upon their *Consciences*, by any *Engagement*, which may *oblige* them to yeild *obedience* or *Allegiance* to such *Persons*, as by a *self-created* Power, shall *assume the Government* over them.

And thus having now proved our first Assertion, *that the matter of this Engagement is contradictory, and diametrically opposite to all our former oathes and sacred obligations*.

We shall proceed to the *proof* of the second, which we proposed: That these *sacred bonds and obligations* doe *indispensibly* bind the *Consciences* of men who have taken them.

Now this we shall prove; first, from the consideration of the *binding nature* of an Oath in the generall. Secondly, by considering these particular Oathes and Obligations.

First, that any Oath that is *lawfull* & *possible, indispensibly binds the Conscience till the thing sworn be* accomplished, appeareth upon this ground, because that in every *lawfull* Oath there is a double *obligation*; one of Man to Man, the other of Man to God, whom *in lifting up our hands unto*, we not only *call* to be a *Witnesse* of our sincere *intentions* to perform what we have sworn to Men, but to take *revenge* upon us if we be *perfidious*: and therefore we finde the Oath that passed between *David* and *Jonathan*, is called, *The Lords oath*, 2 *Sam.*21.7.1 *Sam.*20.6. And the Oath of *Allegiance*,

by

by which *Subjects* are bound to their *Soveraigne*, is called, *The oath of God, Eccles.* 8. 2. *I counsel thee* (saith the Wise-man) *to keep the Kings commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.* And therefore we have a command from *Christ* himself, *Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt performe thy oath to the Lord.* So that, we cannot be absolved in our *consciences* from an Oath, no not by the Parties to whom we are sworne, because we are obliged in all *lawfull* Oathes *to God*, as well as *Man*; and he hath not onely commanded us *to performe our oathes*, *Numb.* 13.3. but as he is a *jealous God*, hath threatned, that he *will not hold those guiltlesse that taketh his Name in vaine.*

Now if all Oathes *lawfull* and *possible* are thus *indispensibly binding*, then it must needs follow, that all those particular Oathes and *sacred obligations*, which we have taken, doe *chaine* us by our *Consciences*, and doe remaine and abide at this present *in full force, effect, and virtue.*

But it may be *objected*, (as it is too *irreligiously* affirmed by many *Patrons* and *Advocates* for *Perjury*, in these perfidious Times) that these *obligations* by *Oathes, Covenant*, and *Protestation*, are all *dissolved, extinct*, and *void.* *Objection.*

We shall only examine what hath been asserted by M. *J. Dury* to this purpose, who takes upon him in his *Considerations, concerning the Engagement*, and *his just* Repropoſals, to resolve the *Conscience* in this great Businesse; to which end he affirmes, *That the oath of Allegiance is void*, pag. 2. *That the Covenant bindeth not*, pag. 7. *That all Engagements in which we were bound to the King or Lords, are void*, pag. 15. Repropoſals.

Now having seriously weighed his *Arguments*, by which he would *confirm his Allegations*, we shall consider *distinctly* of them, and shew their extreame *unsatisfactorinesse* to the *Consciences* of any, but such as through *feare* or *interest* desire to *bribe, corrupt*, & *cozen* their Consciences, that they may take it without *regret.*

In the first place, concerning the Oath of *Allegiance*, to prove it *void*, he expatiates from page 2. to 4. upon this Suppoſition, which he maketh to be his onely *Argument*, *That if the King be found unfaithfull in his trust, we are* ipso facto *absolved from our Allegiance unto him.*

Now this being the marrow of this Proof, we ſhall ſhew the *unſatisfactorineſſe* of it to our judgement and conſciences; and that not onely as 'tis laid downe as a Suppoſition (with an *If it can be made out*) which he doth not in the leaſt prove, but upon theſe Grounds following:

Firſt, if he had proved what he doth but ſuppoſe, *That the King had been unfaithfull to his Truſt*, yet this *diſſolveth* not the Oath of our *Allegiance* to him.

For firſt of all, the Oath is *abſolute*, there is no ſuch *Condition* expreſſed in it, *That if the King prove unlawfull to his Truſt, that then our oath ſhall be void and null.*

Secondly, *Allegiance to our Soveraigne is our Duty*, by the *Law* of *God* & the *Land*, though we were never *engaged* to it by Oath: otherwiſe ſuch as were not *obliged* by the Oath of *Allegiance*, might for their *Diſloyalty to the King*, *be exempted* from ſuffering as *Traytors.*

But thirdly, the *diſſolving* of *Subjects* from their Oathes upon neglect of *Duty* on the *Magiſtrates* part, is not onely *contrary* unto *expreſſe Texts of Scripture*, that require *obedience*, not onely to *good*, but the *froward, for Conſcience ſake.* But *contrary* to M. *Dury's* owne judgment, who in his *Conſiderations*, pag. 11. is poſitive, *That the Rule of* Subjects *behaviour, as* Subjects, *is clearly determined in* Rom. 13. 1. to 8. 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. & Titus 3. 1. *Where we finde nothing but a Command of* Submiſſion *and* Subjection *of not reſiſting, and of paying Taxes and Dues, and of giving honour, feare, and reſpect for Conſcience ſake.*

Now, if this be the *Rule* of *Subjects* behaviour, as *Subjects*, that they are to be *abſolute* in their *obedience*, without any *limitation*, further than (as he ſaith) *that we are bound to obey God rather than Man, and to ſuffer patiently, where we finde cauſe to refuſe obedience.* Then M. *John Dury* is ὁ αὐτοκαταδίκη, *condemned by himſelf*; and that which he *ſuppoſeth* to be the *Ground* of the *diſſolving* the *Oath of Allegiance*, viz: *a ſuppoſition of Abuſe of Truſt on the Kings part*, is both *falſe, abſurd*, and *ſinfull*, by his own *Argument*; and therefore the *Oath of Allegiance is not diſſolved, but binds the Conſcience indiſpenſably*; notwithſtanding all that M. *Dury* hath held forth to *ſatisfie* and *reſolve* the *Conſcience.*

We

We now come in the next place, to examine his *Grounds* upon which he builds the down-fall of the *Covenant*; *For*, saith he, *page* 7. *Suppose that in youn apprehensions this Engagement doth materially settle something in the Common-wealth, which is contrary to the Covenant; yet I say as matters now stand, you break not at all your Covenant, because your obligation to those matters by vertue of your Covenant was extinguished: now that which is extinct and made void, cannot be said to oblige any more. And* (saith he) *all promises are* ipso facto *made void and extinct, in respect of the Tie upon the Conscience, when the thing promised is become in it selfe impossible to be done; or in reference to our Calling, unlawfull to be prosecuted.*

Now for *Answer* to his *Grounds*, though in the *Thesi* we grant, *That then oathes, promises, and obligations doe cease to binde, when they become impossible or unlawfull*: yet we deny it to be so in the *Hypothesi*, in the *present case* of the *Covenant*; and therefore we shall examine and answer his *Gronnds* particularly and *distinctly*.

First, saith he, *It is impossible in Nature, to preserve the Kings life which is cut off, and the House of Lords which is already put down.*

Secondly, *It is not lawfull for any in a private Calling, to attempt the restoring of that, which publike Power hath abolished.*

Now in *answer* to the first, whereas he makes the *Covenant* to be *impossible* to be kept, *the Kings life being cut off*, &c.

We conceive, that first according to the *Law* of the *Land*, the *King* of *England never dies*; and that our *obligation* by the *Covenant* is not rendered *impossible by the Death of King* Charles *the first*, is evident, in that the *Person* of the *King and his Authority*, which are the *objects* of our *Preservation*, are supposed to be *in being* all the *dayes of our lives.*

But, though it should be *granted*, that there is an *impossibility* in the matter of the *Covenant*, in relation to the *Preservation* of *that Kings life* then *existent*, yet *Regall Authority*, and the *Kings Posterity*, they are still in *being*, and it is unto *them* that we are *obliged* by our *Solemne Covenant, and all those sacred Bonds that are upon us.*

As for the *impossibility* of it in reference *to the House of Lords* which is already put down. We answer, that *impossibility* is only *present* and not *absolute*, there is not a *totall cessation* of all *hopes of Recovery of our ancient Government by King and Lords*, though at *present* it be *violently obstructed*, by such a Force as renders the keeping of our *Covenant* at present impossible. But being stil *in esse* both *King and House of Lords*, we must take heed that we do not by the *subscription* of this *Engagement*, *bury them alive*, because in a weak and crazy condition, for this would not only be *Perjury*, but great *Injustice* and *cruelty*.

As to his second *Ground*, that the *Covenant* is *extinct* and *void*, because *unlawfull* to be *presented*, it being *not lawfull for any in a private calling to attempt the restoring of that which hath been abolished by publike Power*.

We answer, that though it be *unlawfull*, for any in a *private Calling*, or by a *private Call*, to attempt the *restoring* of that wch hath been *legally aboliſhed by publike Authority*, yet not to help to *restore* that which hath been *suppressed* or *aboliſhed by publike force* and *power of the sword*, especially if they are *obliged to preserve* them in *being* (and consequently to restore them) *against all force and conspiracy*, *and to bring the Attempters of it, if they be able, to condigne punishment*; which is our case.

As to that which follows in the same Page, *That if you are engaged by promise to restore them, yet still it must be in, and according to our Callings, and as far as lawfully we may, not out of our Callings, or beyond them.*

We answer, It is true, and we desire to be *conscientious* in this particular. But by *subscribing* this *Engagment*, we disable our *selves* from our *Duty* in this respect, & so break our *Covenant*. For when we are *called* by a *lawfull Power*, *with our lives, power, and estates, to performe our Promise, Vow, and Protestation, our Oathes, and Covenant*, we are sinfully precluded by this *Engagement*.

Object. But it may be *objected*, that if the *Covenant* and other *sacred Oathes of Allegiance* are not *extinct* and *void*, upon the former Grounds; yet this present *imposing* Power hath made them *null* and *void*, by taking away all *Allegiance from the Kings heires and successours*, and by the institution of this *new Government*.

To

To which we anſwer, that ſuch a *diſpenſation* from them would not onely be more then *impious* in them to *propound*, but exceeding *ridiculous* for us to believe. For how can we imagine a man that is *manacled* himſelf, to be able to *unbinde* and *looſe others*. But now this is the Caſe of the preſent *Impoſers*, that would *abſolve us*; themſelves being *obliged* by all thoſe *Sacred Bonds* (and that with ſo faſt a *knot*, that in one Oath which they have aſſuredly taken, *viz.* the *Oath of Supremacy*) they do *profeſſe*; that *they do beleeve, and are in conſcience perſwaded, that neither the Pope, or any other perſon whatſoever, hath power to abſolve them of this Oath, or any part thereof.* *Answer.*

So that *de facto* they are *excluded* from being able to diſ-oblige us from thoſe ſacred chains. Now that they are excluded *de jure* alſo, is very evident. *Jure divino*, according to the judgement of all Divines grounded upon the Scriptures; *It is not in the power of any creature, to abſolve us from an Oath lawfull and poſſible to be performed.* And *Jure humano*, they are likewiſe excluded from any ſuch power; for in the *ſtatute* of the 13. of Queene *Elizabeth*, it is expreſly conferred upon the *three Eſtates in Parliament*, the *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*, to alter the *Fundamentall Lawes and Government of the Land, by Oath eſtabliſhed:* but not upon the *Commons*, though *Free* and *Full*.

Now that we may the more *convincingly* demonſtrate, that all thoſe *Sacred Oathes* [the *Proteſtation*, and the *Covenant*] are ſtill binding to our *Conſciences*; (beſides what hath been already proved) we ſhall adde ſome further Conſiderations, from the words that are in thoſe ſacred Ties. Omitting therefore what we laſt mentioned, concerning *that paſſage in the Oath of Supremacy*; we finde that the *Covenant* was not *pro tempore*, binding onely during the preſent *Exigent* we were then in, *But that we are obliged to keep every Article thereof, conſtantly and zealouſly, all the dayes of our lives:* ſo that nothing but *death*, which diſſolveth the knot between our *Bodies* and our *Souls*, can *diſſolve* this *Covenant*, and ſet us at liberty to be free for other engagements. And that the *Proteſtation* of *May* 5. 1649. hath ſtill the ſame obligation upon us, and none *but God* onely can *abſolve* us from it; *appeareth*, in that we have not onely *proteſted*, but have *promiſed* and *vowed* in the

preſence

preſence of Almighty God, that with our *lives*, *power*, and *eſtates*, we will maintain and defend, not the *Kings perſon* onely, but *His Honour and Eſtate*, as alſo the *Power and Priviledges of Parliament*, the lawfull *Rights and Liberties of the Subject*.

But that we will *oppoſe* ſuch as ſhall by *force* or *conſpiracy* doe any thing to the *contrary*, and that we will neither *for hope*, *fear*, *or other reſpect*, *relinquiſh this Promiſe*, *Vow*, *or Proteſtation*.

By all which *Paſſages*, with many other in the ſaid *obligations*, it is moſt *evident* that all thoſe *ſacred oathes* are ſtill *binding*; and that therefore *to ſubſcribe the Engagement*, which hath been *proved* is ſo *point blanke* againſt them, muſt needs be *ſinfull* and *unlawfull*, upon this account, in reſpect of the *quis*, relating not only to the *Preſcribers*, but alſo to the *Subſcribers*, who being (as hath been *proved*) ſo *indiſpenſably engaged*, cannot *ſubſcribe* to this, without *perſpicuous Perjury*.

And thus having now examined *this preſent Engagement*, *to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth*, *as it is now eſtabliſhed without a King and Houſe of Lords*; by two of thoſe *Circumſtances*, which render *Engagements to be ſinfull*, the *quis* and the *quid* of it, omitting the *conſideration* of the *quibus* or the *cui*, the Perſons with whom, and to whom we do *engage* our ſelves, becauſe *coincident* with what we have ſaid in relation to the *quis*, as referring to the Power *impoſing this Engagement*.

We ſhall now come *to conſider* of another *Circumſtance*, that renders *Engagements* in the *generall* to be *ſinfull*; & that is the *cur*, or the *quare*; the *end* wherefore we enter into *Engagements*. Now if the *end* appear to be *ſinfull*, ſo alſo will be the *Engagement*.

Now that the *end* of this *Engagement* is *ſinfull*, is very *obvious* to the dimmeſt ſight: for though it be not *expreſſed* in the ſaid *Engagement in terminis*, yet the *Eradication* of *Monarchy* (under which this *Nation* hath flouriſhed for ſo many *Generations*, and which we are engaged *to maintain*, *and preſerve* by ſo many *obligations*) and alſo *the ſettlement of a prodigious Polarchy*, whoſe *Foundation* hath been laid in *Rebellion*, *Murder*, *Treachery*, and *Perjury*, are the deſigned *ends* of this *Engagement*; and not only ſo, but *to deprive the lawful Heir unto the Crown of his Birth-right*, which is *to ſucceed* in the *Throne*, not only *by the Laws of the Land*, in particular,

lar, by the *ſtatute* of the *firſt of King* James, *Chap.* 1. 2. wherein the *whole Kingdome* doe engage themſelves to *King* James, *his Heires, Succeſſours*, and *Poſterity for ever*; to *defend their undoubted right to the Crowne, with the laſt drop of their blood:* But alſo, by all thoſe *ſacred Oathes of Supremacy, Allegiance, and of a Free-man, &c.* which to doe is ſinfull and unjuſt.

But to this it is implied by M. *Dury*, p. 18,19. That to *exclude the lawfull Heire of the Crowne from his Right*, and to alter the Conſtitution of the Parliament, by nulling the Houſe of Lords, is but a ſeeming inconveniency; but to ſubſcribe the *Engagement*, is an indiſpenſable duty. The one, is but the ſeeming violation of the particular Right of ſome few Perſons, which is or may be doubtfull whether you are engaged thereunto or no. But to engage is a duty which relates to the whole Common-wealth, the ſafety of all, and our owne neceſſary peace and preſervation. And p. 20. (ſaith he) *as for the diſſolution of your Tie to the Heire of the Crowne, I ſhall referre you to looke upon God, whether he hath not diſpoſſeſſed him wholly by his owne doings, and confeſſe, &c.*

Now for Anſwer unto theſe *groundleſſe Aſſertions*, and *confuſed Suppoſitions* of his, under which he doth *extenuate* moſt *crying provocations*;

We ſhall propoſe and prove theſe three Aſſertions: Firſt, that to exclude the *right Heire* of the Crowne, which is the *end* of this *Engagement*, is not only a *ſeeming inconvenieney*, but a *complicated wickedneſſe* made up of *injuſtice, disloyalty* and *treachery*. Secondly, that to ſubſcribe the Engagement, is no *indiſpenſible duty* that relates to the good of the whole Common-wealth. And thirdly, that the preſent *forcible* extruſion and dispoſſeſſion of the right Heire of the Crowne, cannot without horrid impiety, be charged upon God, the righteous Judge of the whole world.

But having (we hope) ſufficiently proved the two former already, we ſhall to his third *Suppoſition*, (page 20.) *That We are diſſolved from our Tie to the Heire of the Crowne, and that it is done by God, whom he ſaith, hath done what is good in his owne eyes, &c.* with abundance of ſuch Independent Concluſions, upon which, he with his *Poſted BRETHREN* have (as he profeſſeth for them all) taken this *Engagement* as a duty,

Juſt Propoſals, p. 10. *Becauſe God hath altered by an extraordinary way the Government*, &c.

We reply, that as we have already proved that *Tie* and *obligation* that is upon us, to the *right Heire to the Crowne*, to be ſtill *binding*, notwithſtanding his forcible *expulſion*. So, to ſay, that God hath *wholly diſpoſſeſt* him, becauſe that *at this time* there are others in the *actuall Poſſeſſion of the ruling Power*, which M. *Dury* implies, pag. 20. of his *Conſiderations*. We conceive, cannot be charged upon the juſt and righteous God, in whom there is no iniquity, without making him the Authour, if not Approver of ſuch unheard of Perjury and Injuſtice, which to thinke were Blaſphemy. We grant indeed, this great Change now in the Kingdome, effected by thoſe extraordinary & extrajudiciall Acts of Murder, Treachery, and Perjury, is not come about without the *determinate counſel of God*, by which *Judas* brought our *Saviour* to the *Croſſe*; and that permiſſive providence by which *Abſalom* and *Adonijah* for a time uſurped the Kingdome of *Iſrael*. But that the wiſe and holy providence of God permitting this, ſhould be interpreted *Gods diſpoſing* of *David* or *Solomon*; and that God is doing that which is good in his owne eyes, and ſhould be a ground for the Subjects Engagements to them, with the violation of the *Oath* of *God* upon them, cannot be *maintained* with *diſhonour to God himſelf*, great injuſtice to the *lawfull Magiſtrate*, and plunging our Soules into the pit of Perjury.

So then, the end of this *Engagement* being to exclude the *right Heire* of the *Crowne*, to extirpate and ſubvert *Kingly Government*, and to introduce through much complicated iniquity, a monſtrous and many-headed *Government*, which muſt be ſupported by moſt horrid Oppreſſions and heavy Taxations, under which (the originall of all juſt Power) the People muſt crouch, with ſuch ſilent ſubmiſſion, as for to ſay publickly, *that it is Tyrannicall*, ſhall coſt them their *lives*, and all *that is dear* unto them.

It appeareth, that though *to engage to be true and faithfull* be a *duty*, and not *ſimply ſinfull* in it ſelf, yet in reſpect of the *matter* of it, *relating* to the *object of the Engagement*, *The Common-wealth of England*, as to a *Government*; and *the qualification of the object*, *as it is now eſtabliſhed without a King and Houſe of Lords*, *circumſtantiated*

tiated with the *quis*, relating to the *Preſcribers*, whom we have *proved* have no *lawfull Power* over others, and to the *Subſcribers*, which have no Power over themſelves; and likewiſe with the *cur*, relating to the *end of ſubſcribing* the whole *Engagement*, *to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth of England* &c. is unlawfull, inexpedient, and therefore ſinfull, in the higheſt degree. And conſequently *to ſubſcribe it*, if there were no more in it than what Maſter *Dury* in his *Repropoſals* doth affirme is declared thereby;

Firſt, *our approbation of the preſent Government.*

Secondly, *our ratifying conſent unto it.*

And thirdly, *our obligation towards the preſent eſtabliſhment*, doth render it to be out of meaſure *ſinfull.*

And now, paſſing over many other frivolous and groundleſſe *Allegations* of M. *Dury*'s, in his *Conſiderations* and *Repropoſals*, for to *ſubſcribe the Engagement*; as flowing from ſuch *principles*, which he takes for *granted* himſelfe, and therefore *magiſterially* propounds them in his own *name*, without *Scripture* or *Reaſon.* As that *the Impoſers are our Rulers and Governours. Repropoſals*, p. 8. And *to ſubſcribe the Engagement, is a duty juſt, to be required by the preſent Powers from their Subjects, Conſider.* p. 16. And *that to ſubſcribe it* is a *duty*, *Repropoſ.* p. 7. *A cleare and confeſſed duty* p. 12. *A lawfull and neceſſary duty*, pag. 13. All which we have fully diſproved.

We ſhall only *anſwer* two or three *Allegations* more, which are urged by ſome for our *ſubſcription*, and ſo conclude.

In the firſt place, we have heard it alledged by ſome, *that to ſcruple the Engagement*, becauſe *pre-engaged* by former *Oathes to the King, his Heirs, and Succeſſours*, is altogether *a needleſſe ſcruple:* becauſe *Oathes* for *fealty* and *allegiance* were *enforced* upon our *Anceſtours* by *William the Conquerour*, being therefore but the *Badges of that Norman Yoak that was put upon us.* The *King* being now dead, and his *Poſterity diſinherited*, we are now free from our *obligations*, in theſe Times of the *Peoples Liberties.*

Now for *anſwer* to this, though it ſhould be *granted*, that ſuch *oathes* ſhould *originally* be *enforced* upon our *Anceſtors* by the *Conquerour*, (which we have *intimated* to the *contrary* from the *Lord Keepers* Speech in *Parliament*) yet in ſeverall *Ages* the *ſacred ties*

have been confirmed by a *Parliamentary power*, to be impoſed upon the whole *Kingdome*, eſpecially in relation to our *late King, his heirs, ſucceſſours, and Poſterity* for ever, as appeareth in that *Act* 1. *Jacob.* c. 1, 2. But were not this our condition, but that through *force*, and as a *People conquered*, we had *engaged* our ſelves by *Oath, To be true and faithfull*, &c. The *forcible Impoſition* doth no way take off the *force of the Obligation*. Though *Zedekiah* were by *Conqueſt* brought into *ſubjection* unto *Nebuchodonozer*, yet this being *confirmed by an Oath* to the ſaid *King*, *his violation of it* is accounted a *deſpiſing of the Oath of God*, which he doth *threaten to bring upon his head*, *Ezech.* 17. *verſ.* 19. *Thus ſaith the Lord, as I live, I will ſurely bring my Oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my Covenant that he hath broken upon his own head, verſ.* 20. *And I will enter into judgement with him for his treſpaſſe that he hath committed againſt me*. So that, *to breake an oath of ſubjection to a Conquerour, is a treſpaſſe againſt God himſelfe*.

But it is further alledged, *We may lawfully ſubſcribe this* Engagement *though the* impoſing Powers *are ſuch as have by the Sword got the* government *into their hands. If we were a* conquered People, *either by the* Turke, *the* Pope, *or the* King *of* Spain, *we are to be in ſubjection to them, as* Conquerours, *their Conqueſt giving them a Title to* Government.

To this we *anſwer*, that it hath not yet been alledged by the Impoſers of this Engagement, *that we are a conquered People*, though we muſt needs ſay, *that we are a cozened People*; through the abuſe of the truſt which was put into the hands of the *Impoſers*, both in *Counſel* and *Campe*, for which we are abſolved from any *fealty* and *allegiance* to them, if any had been by M. *Dury's* judgment in the Caſe of the *King*.

Secondly, were it our condition, *that we are conquered and ſubdued*, yet then *were we to ſubmit* unto ſuch a *Power* only in *lawfull things*, and *things neceſſary* for the *preſervation* of our ſelves and others; but to *ſubſcribe this Engagement*, appeareth to be altogether *unlawfull*, and no way neceſſary to the *preſervation* of our ſelves or others, unleſs it be *to keep* and *preſerve* us in our *enſlaved* and *oppreſſed condition*.

But it is alledged, that though *the* government *of the* Kingdome

was

was altered in an extraordinary *and* extrajudiciall *way, yet God having bleſſed it with ſuch* extraordinary Succeſſes *both in* England *and* Ireland, *by which he hath ſealed his approbation of it, why ſhould not you come in, and ſeal your approbation of it alſo, by your ſubſcription to this Engagement, To be true and faithfull?*

To this we *anſwer*, that *ſucceſſe in ſinfull wayes*, as it muſt be no *ground* for our *compliance* or *approbation*, who do profeſſe our *Guide* to be *the Law and the Teſtimonies*. So neither can it be *a Seal of Gods approbation*. For though we finde that *uſurpation* was attended with *ſucceſſe*, as it was for *three years* together in *Bramble Abilech's* time, *Judg.* 6.22. yet after the *ſucceſſe* in the ruining the men of *Shechem*, his own Party, which were inſtrumentall in bringing him to the *Government*, and in taking in many ſtrong Holds and Garriſons, *putting them to the ſword, verſ.* 45,49,50. The *Lord* ſhewed his *diſ-approbation*, by a ſuddain and ignominious Death, as we reade *verſ.* 53,54.

And as *Abimelech* found in concluſion after three yeers *ſucceſſe* that God approved not of his *uſurping the Government*, but exeted his vengeance by a miſerable Death.

So we finde, that *Abſalom*, who although in the Language of *the Northerne ſubſcribers Plea for the Engagement*, pag. 10. might look upon his *ſuccesfull flattery, hypocriſie, rebellion*, and *uſurping the Government of Iſrael*, as *a Wonderfull appearing* for him, yet in concluſion he came to confuſion; and the Lord appeared to be ſo far from owing or approving his *uſurped Power*, notwithſtanding *former ſucceſſes*, that he was by *Providence* brought to ſuch an end, he might affright any from preſuming to be his ſucceſſours in *diſobedience, treachery*, and *uſurpation*.

But it may be objected, *that ſurely you are more baptized into the ſpirit of Atheiſme than the* Egyptian *Sorcerers that withſtood* Moſes, *or elſe you would never produce ſuch an infamous inſtance as that of* Abſalom, *to parallel with theſe* preſent Powers, *Whom God hath ſo* approved *of, as he hath done. He will ſurely curſe that man and his houſe, that ſaith, it was an arme of fleſh that did what was done in* England, *as making way for this Change, or what hath been done in* Ireland *ſince, North. Plea*, pag. 10. where he refers to Maſter *Cromwels* Letter from *Ireland, Decemb.* 1649. to this purpoſe.

Now in *answer to this objection*, because that we finde the *North subscribers* in the *Plea* for the *Engagement*, laying down this *argument* for their *subscription*, viz. *The being of these present Powers over us from God, Pag.* 7. Testified by *those extraordinary successes, Pag.* 9, 10. where they say, *This is the main foundation upon which they build their obedience, being of such powerfull and direct influences upon their Consciences, Pag.* 11.

We shall enlarge upon our *Parallel*, between *Absalom* and the *Utopian Powers*, and shew what a sandy *foundation Prosperity and Successe*, is for *obedience* and *Allegiance to usurped Powers*; and that it doth not in the least, seal *Gods approbation* thereof.

And because, our *North subscribers* lay claim *to Gods signall* evidencing of his *approving the present Change of Government, by those Wonderfull Appearings of God, antecedent, concomitant*, and *subsequent* to the same, *Pag.* 10. *lin.* 13.

We shall first consider the *Antecedent Appearances of Providence* succeeding *Absalom*, before that he discovered his *ambitious* and *treacherous Designe of usurping the Government.*

In the first place, knowing that if he could but be *Master* of the *hearts* & *affections* of the *Kings Subjects*, he would soon command both their *heads, hands*, & *purses*. He so far succeeded in his *Machivilianisme*, be-spattering of the *Kings Government*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 3. *Insinuating*, that the *King* was altogether *careless of his Subjects Welfare.* And therefore *there was none deputed to hear the Cause, though never so just and righteous, vers.* 3. And in his subtle *intimations* of his deep sense of *the Peoples sufferings*, attended with a *Profession* of his readinesse *to relieve them, and doe them justice, if he were but once made a Judge in the Land, verse* 4. That it is said, *he did steal away the hearts of the People of Israel.* So that it is *evident*, that by the *antecedent Appearances of Providence*, his *Designe* was very *successfull*, and he might say with those *oppressours, Zach.* 11. 5. *Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich*; I am like to get the *Crown*, my *Designe* takes according to my *hearts desire.*

But now in the next place, lest *Absalom* should fall short of his *expectation*, for want of on *oportunity* to get the *Militia* into his hands, and the *People* (whose *hearts he had stollen away*) *into a Body.* We shall finde in the Language of the *North subscribers, the Al-*

mighty

mighty ſmoothing that roughneſſe, and making him ſo *ſucceſfull*, as that the *King* himſelfe doth become *inſtrumentall* in that very work; for having *varniſhed*, and guilded over his *Deſigne* with a religious *pretence* of *keeping his Vow and Covenant*, the *King* not only diſmiſſeth him, but ſends him away with a *bleſſing* to *Hebron*, 2 *Sam.* 15.7. By which meanes he had an *oportunity* to get the People about him; and whileſt he was at his *pretended devotion, to increaſe the Commotion*, for it is ſaid, *verſ.* 12. *Whileſt he offered ſacrifices the People increaſed ſtill with Abſalom.* Having thus *ſucceeded* in laying of this *Deſigne*, we ſhall conſider of the *concomitant and ſucceeding Providences* with which this *wicked wretch* might have been confirmed as well as the *Utopian* Powers.

As firſt, his *forcing* and *driving* away the *King* from his *Metropolis*, the Imperiall City *Jeruſalem*, 2 *Sam.* 15.14.

Secondly, his *glorious entrance into the ſame himſelfe*, taking poſſeſſion of the *Palace Royall*, 2 *Sam.* 15.16. And being there acknowledged for the *ſupreme Magiſtrate*, *verſ.* 16.

Thirdly, his being *poſſeſſed* of all the *Land* unto *Jordan*, whileſt the *King* was forced *to retreat to Mahanaim by the Fourd Jabbok*, 2 *Sam.* 17. 24. Now here was an *un-interrupted ſeries* of *good ſucceſſe*, for a great while together; enough to induce many to doe that really, which *Huſhai* did politickly, 2 *Sam.* 16.17. *acknowledge* this Monſter of Mankinde, to be *choſen* to the *Government* by the *Lord himſelfe, and all the men of Iſrael.* And to ſay with *Shimeah*, 1 *Kings* 12. 24. Returne *every man to his houſe, for this thing is from the Lord.*

But yet notwithſtanding, the *Lord* to vindicate his own glory, by making *knowne* to the world, how much he hateth ſuch horrid *hypocriſie*, *treachery*, and *uſurpation*, not onely put a period to his proſperity, by puniſhing that *unnaturall* and *rebellious Uſurper* with an ignominious death, 2 *Sam.* 18.9. but alſo ſhewed his direfull diſpleaſure againſt thoſe that *engaged* with him, *ver.* 7. there being *twenty thouſand of his Confederates ſlaine alſo the ſame day.*

By all which it *appeares*, that the *ſucceſſe* of an *uſurping Power*, though to the preſent *dispoſſeſſion* of the *lawfull Magiſtrate*, is no *evidence of Gods approbation* of it, nor can be a *Scripture-ground* for *obedience* or *allegiance* to it.

And

And that therefore, as we cannot in *Conſcience* be perſwaded of the *lawfulneſſe of ſubſcribing this Engagement*, upon ſuch *a Mahumetan Principle*; ſo we muſt needs rejoyce in the *faithfulneſſe* of all thoſe *learned, Orthodox*, and *conſciencious Miniſters* amongſt us, who though they are much *condemned* by many in theſe *ſinfull Times*, for their *non compliance* with *Abſaloniſme*, yet are they *juſtified* by *Zadok*, *Abiathar*, and thoſe *godly Levites*, that would not worſhip *the riſing Sun*, nor forgo their *Allegiance to their oppreſſed Sovereigne*, 2 *Sam.* 15.24.29.

But it may be further objected, *How can ye, who have been alwayes well affected to the* common Cauſe of Liberty, *againſt the Deſigne of* Tyranny; *and that have acted ſo highly againſt the Forces raiſed by the late King? How can ye refuſe the ſubſcribing this Engagement, without deſerting the godly and faithfull in the Land, and adhering to the* Malignant *Party, which ye have oppoſed all this while?*

To which we *anſwer*, that in *declining* and *oppoſing this Engagement*, we do not *apoſtatize* in the leaſt from our firſt *principles* of *oppoſition of Tyranny*, and *contending for the lawfull Rights*, and *the Liberties of the Kingdom*; but our *oppoſing* & *refuſing this Engagement*, as a *ſinfull ſupport* unto *uſurpation*, is a clear *evidence* of the uprightneſſe of our aimes and ends, in what we did at firſt upon *the Parliament Remonſtrance*. For if we ſhould now *cloſe* with *Tyranny* and *uſurpation* (becauſe now carried on by ſome Perſons whom we otherwiſe honour and love for their *Profeſſion of godlineſſe*) we ſhould *demonſtrate* our *oppoſition of tyranny and oppreſſion* out of *faction*; not becauſe the thing was evil in it ſelfe, but as it was an evil in ſuch Perſons that we did not reverence and eſteem.

As for an appearance of *adhering to Malignants*, which we have all this while oppoſed. We *anſwer*, that this refuſing of the *Engagement*, is no ſuch *Indication*; for we deſire nothing more than to be in a capacity acccording to our *Covenant*, *of bringing all Malignants, and evil Inſtruments that have hindered the Reformation of Religion, divided the King from his People, and one Kingdome from another, and made a faction amongſt the People* to condigne Puniſhment.

Object. But it may be alſo objected, Can ye deny but that this *Engagement*

ment is, & hath been *ſubſcribed* by many that are *truly godly*. Why then ſhould ye by this your *oppoſition* and *ſcrupeloſity* make your ſelves more *wiſe*, *holy*, and *conſcientious* than they?

For *anſwer* to this, though we grant it, that it is *poſſible*, that there are many *godly Perſons* whoſe underſtandings being *muffled*, by M. *Dury*'s *Sophiſtry*, may in *the ſimplicity of their hearts ſubſcribe this Engagement*, as the *People followed* Abſalom *in his Rebellion*. Yet comparing them with the number of thoſe that doe it upon Deſigne, as for *to keep up that ungodly Toleration that is yet permitted to errour and hereſie: to keep themſelves ſtill in Places of Profit and Advantage, out of which others are excluded; or to preſerve themſelves from being called to Account for all thoſe extrajudiciall Proceedings*.

We thinke we may *without breach of Charity*, conclude their number to be very few; but yet if they were many more than they are, and ſuch as were of good repute for *godlineſſe*, yet we are to be Followers of their example no further than we finde them to be *Followers of Chriſt, and of his will revealed in his Word*; neither muſt we ſet the *Watch* of our *Conſciences* by the *Conſciences* of others, but by the *Sun-diall* of the ſacred *Scriptures*.

And now for our *vindication* of what we have done in *diſputing the Right and Title of the preſent Impoſers of this Engagement*, and diſcovering *the unlawfulneſſe* and *inexpediency of it*. We ſhall *conclude* with a ſhort *anſwer* to what is alledged by M. *Dury* againſt this practice of ours, who in his *Reproposals*, pag. 11. propoundeth *Reaſons, Why none ſhould queſtion the Impoſers of the Engagement, nor interpret it as the Propoſers have done. It is* (ſaith he) *not onely prepoſterous, and contrary to the nature of healing of Breaches, and of advancing of publike good in this time of diſtraction, but inconſiſtent with charity, and oppoſite to that wiſdome which is from above, teaching us to have pure and peaceable thoughts in all our actings, to performe Duties in godly ſimplicity, and without worldly wiſdome, &c.*

To all which we ſhall onely ſay, That if M. *Dury* can *preſcribe* no better way *to heale our Breach*, than by *the uſe of ſuch untempered morter*; no way *to advance the publike good* in this time of diſtraction, but by *ſubſcribing this ſinfull Engagement* without the

leaſt diſpute or contradiction. As we cannot much wonder that the paines he hath taken in *healing the Breaches between the Calviniſts* and *Lutherans* hath been to ſo little purpoſe. So we muſt needs ſay, that this *Argument* for *blinde obedience to this Act for ſubſcription without any diſpute or examination of the lawfulneſſe of it*, (Becauſe it would demonſtrate our *godly ſimplicity, gentleneſſe, and eaſineſſe to be entreated.*) is not onely *contrary* unto M. *John Goodwin*'s judgment, *Antecaveleriſme* from p. 18. to 22, where he hath ſix *Arguments* for his *Confutation* and our *Vindication:* but is an *exceeding ſimple* and *ſinfull Argument*; and that becauſe it not onely *condemneth the Generation of the Juſt* in former Times, who have *with the three Children diſputed, queſtioned*, and *oppoſed unlawfull Commands With undaunted reſolution:* but alſo *condemneth* all that hath been done *by this Generation, in their refuſing Conformity to ſuperſtitious Innovations* in the *Church*, and *illegall Impoſitions in the Common-Wealth*, as being *contrary to the nature of healing of Breaches, inconſiſtent with the wiſdome that is from above:* and as teſtifying their *godly ſimplicity*, and that they have not beene ſuch who ſhould have beene *gentle and eaſie to be entreated.*

And we adde further, that had this *Doctrine* of M. *Dury*'s for *blinde obedience*, and *non-reſiſtance of the preſent Powers* from *Rom.* 13. and other places, beene preached at the *beginning* of theſe *Troubles* by M. *John Goodwin*, M. *Hugh Peters*, and many other of *the preſent State-Chaplaines.* In ſtead of *conjuring* us to ſtand up for our *Liberties*, and not to be afraid, but *to fight* for our *Brethren, our Sons, and Daughters, our Wives and our houſes, Neh.* 4.14. Which was M. *Peters* frequent *Text*, when he preached away our *Plate* and *Apprentices.*

Our *King* had not onely been upon his *Throne*, and our *Money* in our *Purſes*, but our *fields* had never been *dunged* with the dead Carcaſſes of ſo many thouſand of our ſlaughtered *Brethren.*

But though all this be come upon us, through *the cunning craftineſſe* of ſome, whom we now ſee had an *ungodly Deſigne for the Eradication of Monarchy, the King, and his Poſterity*, when *they With the Parliament* awakened us, *to the defence of our Liberties*, and

and not to lie crouching downe with *Iſſachar*, between our *Burthens*; *which being effected*, they would now have ſupported *by ſubſcribing* this ſinfull *Engagement*, without diſpute, as the way *to heale our Breaches, and to teſtifie our godly ſimplicity, &c.*

Yet ſhall not we fall from our firſt Principles, deale unfaithfully with our Covenant, or let goe our integrity till we die. But as our Conſciences doe witneſſe that we had no ſuch Deſignes in our chearfull and cordiall aſſiſtance of the Parliament with our Lives and Fortunes, *To preſerve the true Proteſtant Religion, the King's Majeſties Perſon, the Rights and Priviledges of Parliament, and the Liberty of the Subject.* So to witneſſe to the world our ſoules abhorrency of what hath been done unto the contrary, and that we cannot in Conſcience conſent unto it, or ratifie the ſame by our *ſubſcription* to this ſinfull *Engagement*, which would make us *Medlers with thoſe that are given to change*, *Prov.* 24. 21. We ſay with *Pilate* in another caſe, *What We have Written, We have Written.*

FINIS.